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Local Self-Government

Action taken by the Government on the report of the Special Officer appointed to investigate the finances of Local Boards and Municipalities.

*318 *Q.*—Mr. A. B. SHETTY: Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have accepted any of the proposals made by the Special Officer for stabilising the financial position of the district boards and municipal councils; and

(*b*) whether they are taking any action in the matter?

A.—(*a*) & (*b*) The Government have accepted the recommendation of the Special Officer that the levy of tolls on non-motor vehicles should be revived. Necessary legislation to give effect to the recommendation will be undertaken by Government. Orders on the other recommendations of the Special Officer will issue shortly.

Mr. A. B. SHETTY:—"When the Government propose to bring forward this legislation?"

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"The date has not been fixed; probably in the next session."

Diwan Bahadur C. S. RATNASABHAPATI MUDALIYAR:—"The answer is that the Government have accepted the recommendation of the Special Officer. May I know whether the local boards and municipalities were consulted in regard to the revival of the tolls?"

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"They have been consulted; the hon. Member himself knows that."

Mr. U. C. SUBRAHMANYA BHATT:—"May I know why the old system of levying tolls on all vehicles—motor and non-motor—should not be revived and the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act be given up altogether?"

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Such action is not going to bring any additional revenue."

Mr. V. T. ARASU:—"Will the hon. the Minister be pleased to give us an idea of the amount that the Government anticipate would be realized by the levy of tolls on non-motor vehicles?"

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"It is not possible to give an exact estimate without having exact figures as to the number of non-motor vehicles in the districts; it will be about Rs. 30 lakhs."

Diwan Bahadur C. S. RATNASABHAPATI MUDALIYAR:—"May I ask whether the majority of votes are in favour of the introduction of toll on non-motor vehicles or against it?"

The hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"The majority of the municipalities are in favour; the majority of district boards against.

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But I may mention for the information of hon. Members of this House that it is proposed to give the power to such local bodies as wish to levy tolls."

Mr. V. M. Ramaswami Mudaliyar:—"May I ask whether the opinion of local bodies was not in favour of levy of tolls on motor vehicles also?"

The hon. the Raja of Bobbili:—"Some have expressed their opinion on that point but others have not."

Mr. V. T. Arasu:—"Is the hon. Member aware of the strength of feeling in the country against the levy of tolls on non-motor vehicles?" 11-15 a.m.

The hon. the Raja of Bobbili:—"There are differences of opinion, but, as I stated already, it is proposed to leave the matter to the local bodies."

Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti:—"What is the opinion of the Government, Sir?"

The hon. the Raja of Bobbili:—"The opinion of the Government is that in the present financial difficulties, in order to restore the financial equilibrium of the local bodies, legislation is necessary."

Mr. Abdul Hameed Khan:—"Will the Government make it obligatory on district boards to levy the tolls?"

The hon. the Raja of Bobbili:—"I cannot give a definite reply to that; I will have to consider the point."

Mr. V. T. Arasu:—"Are we to understand that the Government propose to undertake this legislation without any idea as to the number of non-motor vehicles plying on the roads?"

The hon. the Raja of Bobbili:—"They have a rough idea; what I stated was that it is not possible to give the exact figures."

Mr. V. T. Arasu:—"Are the Government aware of the fact that the incidence of the levy of tolls on non-motor vehicles will fall on the agriculturists?"

The hon. the Raja of Bobbili:—"Not in all cases."

Road Development Schemes.

* 319 *Q.*—Mr. W. W. Ladden: Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether in view of the favourable offer made by the hon. Member for Finance of the Government of India at the Road-Rail Conference in April, for the financing of road development schemes by means of loans, the Government were conducting surveys in the Presidency so as to have road schemes ready at hand before the next Road-Rail Conference which it is understood has been convened to consider such schemes;